In Dr. Barton's 'Compendium Floræ Philadelphicæ' this plant is named "wild potato-vine." It is common in the swamps of New Jersey, but more abundant perhaps in East Florida, where the writer of this article, in exploring that desolate country before its cession to the United States, found its tuberculous roots to be a most excellent succedaneum for the potato.

The root mentioned in Smith's 'History of Virginia' under the name of *Tockawhoughe*, which some have supposed to be the potato, is the plant called in Jefferson's 'Notes on Virginia' *Tuckahoe*, the *Lycoperdon tuber*. It has no resemblance to the potato.

Thus there is no evidence whatever, that either the colonists of Roanoke or those of James Town had ever seen the potato among the natives of those countries; and we are warranted in asserting that there has not been a single instance of this plant being observed in a wild state in any part of the United States by any of the numerous botanists who have assiduously explored our country. Should it be found in those extensive tracts which yet invite research, happy will the discoverer be to whom this honour shall belong of adding to our flora a production, that, on the score of utility, is worthy to be ranked among those vegetables which greatly contribute to the wealth of nations by augmenting the sustenance of man.

XXIV.—*Description of* Caprolagus, *a new genus of Leporine Mammalia.* By E. Blyth, Esq., Curator of the Asiatic Society's Museum *.

In the 'Bengal Sporting Magazine' for August 1843, p. 131, Mr. Pearson has described an animal by the name *Lepus hispidus*, which I have long been very desirous of examining, and have sought to procure by every opportunity that has offered; and the Society has at length been favoured with a fine specimen of it by our esteemed correspondent and contributor, Major Jenkins, Political Agent in Assam.

As I fully expected, this animal has proved to be not satisfactorily admissible into *Lepus*, as the limits of generic divisions are now currently accepted, but must be regarded as a third generic type of the *Leporina*, Waterhouse; or rather it is a very strongly marked modification of the *Lepus* subtype, and not so distinct a form (equivalent to *Lepus*) as is that of *Lagomys*. In all its more essential characters it is akin to *Lepus*, but exhibiting very considerable modification in the various details of its structure. The head is large, the eyes small, the whiskers slight and inconspi-

* From the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, No. 76.

cuous; the ears are comparatively very short; tail the same; limbs small, and much less unequal than in *Lepus*; and the claws are particularly strong, straight, and very sharp-pointed, being obviously of important use in the creature's œconomy: lastly, the fur is very remarkable for an animal of the Leporine group, on account of its harshness, which is well expressed by the specific appellation *hispidus*.

The skull is much more solid and strong than in any *Lepus*, with every modification that should contribute to increased strength, but upon the same subtypical model of conformation; dentition also similar, but the grinders broader and more powerful, and the incisors and rodential tusks proportionally much larger: the palatal foramina are reduced so that the bony palate is as long as broad; the ant-orbital foramina are nearly closed by obliquely transverse bony spiculæ, corresponding to the open bony network observable in *Lepus*; the nasal bones are broad, with an evenly arched transverse section, and are less elongated backward than in the true Hares,—the maxillaries and intermaxillaries corresponding in their greater width and solidity; zygoma also fully twice as strong as in *Lepus*; the super-orbital processes continued forward uninterruptedly, the anterior emargination seen in the Hares being quite filled up with bone, while the posterior is also much less deep.

What little is known of its essential anatomy is, as might be expected, identical, or nearly so, with that of typical *Lepus*. Mr. Pearson notices that "the mammæ are from six to ten; cæcum very large, apparently almost like a second stomach; womb double."

The length of the Society's specimen as mounted, is, in a straight line from nose to tail-tip, fifteen inches and a half; ears posteriorly two inches; tail with hair scarcely one and a half; tarsus to end of claws three and three-quarters; entire length of skull the same: fur of two kinds, that next the body short, delicately soft and downy, and of an ashy hue; the longer and outer fur harsh and *hispid*, and consisting partly of hairs annulated with black and yellowish brown, and partly of longer black hairs, all the black having rather a bright gloss: lower parts paler or dingy whitish: toes somewhat yellowish white: fur of the tail rufescent above and below, except near its base underneath, and not of the same harsh texture as the body fur.

Mr. Pearson, in his original description of this species, remarks as follows: "From the notes of Mr. C. D. Russell, who sent the stuffed skin from which the description has been drawn up, I learn that the animal was killed on the right bank of the river Teestah, close under the saul forest, and about six miles north of Jelpee Goree. In this place they are said to be very scarce, not

above four having been seen by Mr. Russell's party during ten days, though game of all other kinds was met with in great plenty; and the following year the same party killed only one. But towards the hills, as Mr. Russell was told by the natives of that part of the country, they may be met with in greater abundance. Of the habits of this animal little is known. Mr. Russell states that 'its flesh is white, and eats very much the same as that of the rabbit;' and from the circumstance of his never having succeeded in putting one up a second time, he is almost certain that it burrows. It is called by the natives of the country, where it was met with, by the same name that they give to the hare."

Mr. R. W. G. Frith, upon examining the Society's specimen, believes it to be the same animal so often described to him by sportsmen, who have on several occasions been shooting in the extensive sâl jungle in the district of Mymunsing, called the Muddapore jungle, on the western or right bank of the Burrampooter river; but he never chanced to meet with it himself, though he long ago called my attention to the existence of such an animal in that part.

It is included in Messrs. McClelland and Horsfield's list of the Mammalia of Assam, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1839, p. 152, but with the statement that the ears are "very short, not projecting beyond the fur," which is either a mistake, or another species is alluded to; though I believe the former to be the truth: Mr. McClelland remarking, "I am indebted to Lieut. Vetch of Assam for the skin of this animal, but unfortunately the skull is wanting. According to Mr. Pearson, however, it is the same as the skull of the common hare. It inhabits Assam, especially the northern parts of the valley along the Bootan Mountains." The differences of the skull from that of any *Lepus* have been already adverted to.

I propose that it should bear the generic name *Caprolagus*, and be accordingly styled *C. hispidus* (Pearson), nobis.

XXV.—*A Synopsis of the British* Rubi.

By Charles C. Babington, M.A., F.L.S., F.G.S. &c.*

It is only of late years that the fruticose species of *Rubus* have received the attention which they deserve: botanists were long contented to call them all *R. fruticosus* or *R. cæsius*, and the introduction by Smith of another name (*R. corylifolius*) must have appeared to be a very great innovation. Each of these is a collective species, by which I mean, one in which many forms, doubt-

* Read before the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, Feb. 12, 1846.